



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Glacier
Ranger
District

P.O. Box 129
Forest Station Road
Girdwood, AK 99587

File Code: 1950

Date: January 15, 2004

Dear Friend of the Chugach National Forest:

Enclosed is your copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Commercially Guided Helicopter Skiing on the Kenai Peninsula. The DEIS describes the Proposed Action, the No-Action Alternative, and five action alternatives ranging from 800 client days and 104,700 acres to 2,200 client days and 135,400 acres.

Our preferred alternative is Alternative 3 - Reduced Recreation Conflicts and Impact on Communities. This alternative addresses user conflicts and community impacts by incorporating both the use of timing features and a reduction in the proponent's proposed use level to 2,200 client days. In addition, community impacts are addressed by eliminating a staging area adjacent to Moose Pass and by reducing the amount of skiing area within an audible and visual zone adjacent to several of the communities.

As the deciding officials, we are responsible for authorizing the requested special use permit. The decision we must make is whether or not to issue a 5 year special use permit for guided helicopter skiing on the Kenai Peninsula starting December 2004. We also must determine any mitigating measures that would be required.

Your comments will be accepted for 60 days following the publication of a notification of release in the Federal Register and a notice in the Anchorage Daily News. The purpose of this comment period is to provide an opportunity for comment on the DEIS prior to the completion of the Final EIS and Record of Decision. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Comments may be addressed to Teresa Paquet, Interdisciplinary Team Leader:

Glacier Ranger District, P.O. Box 129, Girdwood AK 99587
E-mail - tpaquet@fs.fed.us
Facsimile - 907-783-2094

Additional information regarding this action, including a copy of the DEIS can be obtained from the following locations:

Glacier Ranger District
Forest Station Road
P.O. Box 129
Girdwood AK 99587
907-783-3242

Seward Ranger District
334 Fourth Ave
P.O. Box 390
Seward AK 99664
907-224-3374

Chugach NF Supervisors Office
3301 C Street, Suite 300
Anchorage AK 99503-3998
907-743-9500

In addition, the DEIS can be viewed and downloaded from the Chugach National Forest web page at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/>.



For the 2004 season, we have made the decision to issue a 1 year special use permit to CPG for commercially guided skiing on 7 zones totaling 159,100 acres. The permitted use is identical to the 2003 authorization in which 1,200 client days and 2 helicopters were permitted. The Decision Memo can be viewed on the Chugach web page and copies can be obtained from the above mentioned locations.

Sincerely,

James M. Fincher

JAMES M. FINCHER
Glacier District Ranger

Debora Cooper

DEBORA COOPER
Seward District Ranger